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THE
INVALIDITY

OF

Presbyterian Ordination

Proved from the

PRESBYTERIANS Own Doctrine

Of the

TWOFOLD ORDER:

OR

A SUMMARY VIEW of what has passed in
Controversy between Dr WELLS and Mr
PEIRCE concerning the Invalidity of Presby-
terian Ordination.

Imprimatur,

GUIL. LANCASTER Vice-Can. Oxon.

Octob. 29. 1707.

OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATER for Jo. Stephens, and are
to be sold by James Knapton at the Crown in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, London. 1707.



To Mr JAMES PEIRCE.

SIR,

HAVING in my foregoing Papers (distinguished by Numb. I, II, III, and IV.) largely and fully discussed, what you have offered by way of Answer to my Theſes or Propoſitions, and alſo what you have aſſerted in your Own, I judged it Convenient for ſeveral Reaſons to draw up a *Summary* Account of what has paſſ'd in Controverſy between us, with more immediate Reference to the Merits of the Cauſe, which I now ſend you

I ſhall only obſerve here in General, that in the Controverſy relating to *Presbyterian Ordination*, there are Two very different Questions to be diſtinctly conſidered, *viz.*

First, Whether the *Threſfold* or the *Twofold* Order be of Divine Inſtitution?

Secondly, Whether, ſuppoſing the *Twofold* Order to be of Divine Inſtitution, it will not even from thence follow, that *Presbyterian Ordination* is *Invalid*?

'Tis obvious to Any One of Judgment, that thoſe Two Questions are Vaſtly Different One from the Other; and conſequently that *to Diſprove the Threſfold*, or *to Prove the Twofold Order*, is vaſtly Different from *Proving the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination*. And yet 'tis as obvious to Any One that has converſed with the Writers of your Party, that they do Confound together theſe Two Questions, tho' ſo vaſtly Different in themſelves; and that from any Cavils they can ſtart up againſt the *Threſfold* Order, they are apt without any more adoe to Infer the *Validity of Presbyterian Ordination*, tho' it do's by no means neceſſarily follow.

This is an Error, which (I appeal to the Judicious Reader, if) you your ſelf are not all along Guilty of thro' your whole Set of Propoſitions. For the Arguments there-

The Preface.

is contained, (tho' they were All True, as I have shew'd they are not, yet) at the upshot will amount only to this, *viz.* to *Weaken and Overthrow the Threefold Order*. But this is Far from Coming up to, and Proving the Main Point to be Proved by you, namely, that from the *Threefold Order being Ill-grounded*, and the *Twofold Order being of Divine Institution*, it will necessarily follow, that *Presbyterian Ordination is Valid*.

This is what I plainly Deny; and the Direct Contrary is what I undertake to Prove in my Theses, namely from the 7th to the 13th inclusively. And I leave the Reader to Judge, if I have not Proved it; or if you have made any Pertinent Answer to my Arguments contained in the said Theses; the said Answer made by you to my said Theses (as well as your Own Propositions) tending only to *Prove the Twofold Order* (as the Reader will perceive in its place) which is quite a Different thing, as I have observed, from *Proving the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination*. To do this therefore it still remains for you, to Give some *New Answer*, or to Draw up some *New Propositions* more Pertinent and Close to the Main Point at present Controversed between Us.

As to the Former of the Two Questions abovementioned, 'tis what I shall give a Distinct Consideration to, if the Books lately published, and which I have referred you to, will not satisfy you. 'Tis the Latter of the said Questions my Theses have Principal Regard to, and which therefore I am at present concerned in. And that my Theses still *Held Good*, notwithstanding Any thing offered by you, either directly against them, or in your Propositions, the Judicious and Impartial Reader will perceive by the following Summary.

A SUM-



A
SUMMARY VIEW
OF
What has passed in Controversy
BETWEEN
DR WELLS and Mr PEIRCE
Concerning the
INVALIDITY
OF
Presbyterian Ordination.

Dr Wells's Thesis against the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination, with Mr Peirce's Answers &c.

I. **T**HE Validity of *Any* Ordination do's immediately depend on the Valid Authority of Him or Them, by whom *is performed* the said Ordination. Therefore

Mr Peirce. I have Granted your Thesis, as you may see by my First Letter, p. 43. "And we not only implicitly but expressly Grant his Main Point, as He calls it, that None can Lawfully Ordain (I am not concerned in Cases of

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"Utmost Necessity) except Those that are invested with the
"Power of Ordination. *Let. 6. p. 28. and Let. 8. p. 4.*

II. The Validity of *Presbyterian* Ordination practised at
the Reformation do's not immediately depend on the Valid Au-
thority of Those called *Presbyters* in *N. T.* because by them
was not performed the said Ordination. But

III. The Validity of *Presbyterian* Ordination practised at
the Reformation do's immediately depend on the Valid Autho-
rity of those called *Presbyters* at the Reformation, because by
them was performed the said Ordination.

[I have placed these Two Theses here together, be-
cause Mr *Peirce* observes *Let. 4. p. 72.* that the *Third* is
closely connected with the *Second*, and is Answered in speaking
to it. Now my *Second Thesis*, for the Clearer Proof
of the Truth of it, I drew up *Numb. II. p. 19, 20.* into
a Syllogistical Form thus:

Those Persons on whom the Validity of *Presbyte-
rian* Ordination practised at the Reformation do's
immediately depend, are those Persons by whom was
performed the said Ordination.

Those Persons called *Presbyters* in *N. T.* are not those
Persons, by whom was performed the said Ordination.

Therefore Those Persons called *Presbyters* in *N. T.*
are not Those Persons, on whom the Validity of *pres-
byterian* Ordination practised at the Reformation do's
immediately depend.

To this my Thesis thus Syllogistically drawn up,
this Answer is returned by Mr *Peirce*, viz.]

Mr *P.* If you consider the Ordainers Personally, as *Peter*,
John, *Luther*, *Calvin*, &c. I Grant your whole Argument. —
—And All the Consequence of your Argument thus Granted,
is only this, That as the Scripture do's not tell us who by
Name should be Officers in After-ages, so We are to Learn
this by Comparing Persons Pretensions with the Scripture-Rule.
Let. 7. p. 6.

Dr *W.* Very well, and this Consequence is Enough for
my Purpose. For upon Comparing Persons Pretensions with the
Scripture-Rule, it appears, that *Luther*, *Calvin*, (and the
Other *Presbyters* in dispute) tho' called by the Like Name of
Presbyters,

Presbyters, as *Peter, John, &c.* are some times called in N. T. yet they were Far from having the Ministerial Power of Ordination, as They had, *Numb. III. p. 9.* And this will appear from my following Theses, For to proceed.

IV. Those called *Presbyters at the Reformation* had *Not* any Valid Authority to Ordain, according to the Doctrine either of the *Threefold Ministerial Order* maintained by the *Episcopal Party*, or of the *Twofold Ministerial Order* maintained by the *Presbyterian Party*. For to come to Particulars:

Mr P. Your Fourth Proposition will be spoken to under the other Propositions, which contain the Particulars of it, *Let. 4. p. 72.*

V. The Doctrine of the *Threefold Ministerial Order* is this, namely, that from the *Apostles time* there have been these (Distinct) Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, *Bishops* specially or properly so called, to whom Alone belongs the Power of Ordaining; *Presbyters* or *Priests* specially so called, to whom belongs the Power (Not of Ordaining, but only) of *Preaching and Administering the Sacraments*; and *Deacons* specially so called. Therefore

VI. Those called *Presbyters at the Reformation* had *Not* any Valid Authority to Ordain, according to the Doctrine of the *Threefold Order*; because the said Doctrine is Built and Stands upon this Very Foundation, that Such as have been from the *Apostles time* (specially and properly) called *Presbyters*, have No Right to the Power of Ordaining by any Divine Institution, and consequently were Never invested with it.

Mr P. I flatly deny the Doctrine of the *Threefold Order* to be True, and I can't see, why you should not have apply'd your self immediately to the Proof of it. *Let. 4. p. 72.*

Dr W. I did judg it Not Requisite to apply my self (in my Theses) to the Proof of the *Threefold Order* for these Reasons;

1. Because our Writers that have writ in *Defence of Episcopacy*, have thereby in effect Proved the *Threefold Order*. But I have since more especially look'd upon it to be Superfluous for me to Comply with the Demand of Proving anew the *Threefold Order*, because (as I have observed *Numb. IV. p. 26.*) there is a New Treatise lately published, even since you

you have made these Demands, wherein the *Threefold Order* is with Great Clearness and Rational Evidence Proved both from Scripture and Antiquity, I mean; Dr *Potter's* Discourse of Church-Government. This is in Justice to be look'd upon, as a *Satisfactory Answer* to your Demands, till you have shewn wherein it is *Unsatisfactory*, or till you can *invalidate* the Arguments therein brought for the *Proof of the Threefold Order*.

2. But besides the foregoing Considerations, there is (as I have observed also *Numb. IV. p. 26, 27*) Another, which sways chiefly with me in this Matter. For tho' it be true, that the Proof of the *Threefold Order* will necessarily infer the Invalidity of *Presbyterian Ordination*, yet 'tis as true; that (tho' the *Threefold Order* should be ill grounded; yet) the Doctrine even of the *Twofold Order*, if rightly apprehended and thoroughly understood, do's no less necessarily infer the Invalidity of *Presbyterian Ordination*. This is what you and your Party seem Never to have so much as Thought of, much less Feared; This is what you seem to be very Unwilling Now to Hear of, and more Unwilling to Understand, and therefore would fain Divert me from Proving and Laying it Open, by Setting me upon the Proof of the *Threefold Order*; This is what has not been Insisted on (if so much as Touched upon) by other Writers of our Own; and therefore I can't but think on all these accounts, that the Best piece of Service, or the most Direct and Effectual Way to put an End to this Controversy, is to Turn, as it were, your own Cannon against you, and to shew, that *your own Doctrine of the Twofold Order* do's effectually destroy *your Own Cause*. *Numb. III. p. 32, 33. and Numb. IV. p. 26, 27.*

Mr P. I do not — pretend, that if you can Prove, from Our Doctrine of the *Twofold Order*, the Invalidity of *Presbyterian Ordination*, it will not be Sufficient. *Letter. 8. pag. 78.*

Dr W. As you cannot but allow *such a Proof* to be *Sufficient*, so I proceed to shew, that *Such a Proof* is contained in my Following *Theses*. Proceed we then to your Own Doctrine,

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VII. The Doctrine of the *Twofold* Ministerial Order is This, that there are but *Two* Orders in the Ministry according to *Divine* or *Apostolical* Institution, namely (a) One Order, to which belongs the Name of *Bishop* as well as *Presbyter*, and the Power of *Ordaining* as well as of *Preaching* and *Administering Sacraments*; and (a) Another Order, called *Deacons*. Therefore

Mr P. Your Seventh Proposition I Allow, *Let. 4. p. 73.*

VIII. According to the Doctrine of the *Twofold* Order it necessarily follows, that of the *Three* Orders (which did Obtain, and can by Ecclesiastical History be demonstrated from the *Apostles* time to the Reformation) the Order (a) to which belonged the Office *only* of *Preaching* and *Administering Sacraments*, and to which the Name of *Presbyters* was all along Appropriated for the time above Specified, was *not* of *Divine* or *Apostolical* Institution. Therefore

Mr P. To this I answer, that whereas Many did by Mistake judg the Offices of a Bishop and of a Presbyter to be Two Distinct and Different Offices, when they were Really but One and the Same according to Divine Institution; so those who were ordained to the Office of a Bishop or of a Presbyter, were ordained Really to the Same Office, and consequently were invested with the same Power. And therefore the whole matter do's depend on the Divine Institution, and not on Ecclesiastical History, since 'tis by the Divine Institution we are to Correct the Mistakes of After-times; tho' I think Ecclesiastical History affords several Considerable Testimonies on Our side, and Some of them more Antient than what our Adversaries can alledge. But I am willing to shorten the Dispute, and therefore refer wholly to the Divine Institution. This Answer to the Eighth Proposition is a Full Answer to All your othes Propositions which follow, and therefore I need not speak particularly to them, *Let. 4. p. 73.*

Dr W. The Answer given by you, was if True, would indeed weaken the *Threesfold*, and make for the *Twofold* Or-

(a) I avoid the Words *Superiour*, *Middle*, and *Inferiour* (used as first in this and the following Theses) to put a Stop to some Cavils grounded thereupon by Mr P. *Let. 7. p. 15.* and elsewhere.
dec,

der. But that it is, supposing it True, *No Answer* to my *Eighth Proposition*, and therefore very Far from being a *Full Answer* to *All my Other Propositions which follow*, I shall make appear from the Ensuing Considerations. 'Tis then to be observed, that in my 8th Thesis or Proposition and those that follow, I argue from the *Presbyterians Own Principles*, or on Supposition of the *Truth of the Doctrine of the Twofold Order*. And my Argument stands thus, that if the said Doctrine be True, then besides the Two Scripture-Offices allowed of by the *Presbyterians*, there has since the times of N. T. been introduced and practised in the Church Another Office, viz. *Only of Preaching and Administering Sacraments*, which tho' called by the Name of the Office of *Presbyters*, yet is not the Office of *Scripture-Presbyters*, but an *Unscriptural Office*, and so *Not of Divine Institution*.

Let us now see, whether what Mr P. calls his *Answer to my 8th Proposition*, do's take away the Force of what is asserted by me in the said Proposition, or do's not rather Confirm it. *Many*, saith he, *did by MISTAKE judg the Offices of a Bishop and of a Presbyter to be Two Distinct and Different Offices, when they are really but One and the Same according to Divine Institution*. Very well, and do's not Mr P. by Granting, that *Many were Mistaken*, Clear the Way (as much as I could possibly desire him) for the Introducing what I assert upon my Present Hypothesis was introduced, viz. the Unscriptural Office only of Preaching and Administering Sacraments. 'Tis not in Common Charity to be supposed, that Those that introduced the said Unscriptural Office, would do it *Knowingly*, and *Purposely* in Opposition to the Divine Institution. But the plain Matter of Fact, according to Mr P. Own Account, must be this: According to the True Meaning or Intent of Scripture, the Powers of Preaching, and Administering Sacraments, and also Ordaining do belong to One and the Same Office, to which in N. T. are applyed the Names both of *Bishop* and *Presbyter*. But *Many did by Mistake judg*, that by these Two different Names were denoted in N. T. Two Different Offices, viz. by the Name of *Bishops* the Office of Preaching, Administering Sacraments, and also Ordaining; by the

the Name of *Presbyters* the Office only of Preaching, and Administ'ring Sacraments. Well, What is the consequence of this *Mistake*? Why, hereupon Those that lay under this *Mistake* Ordained Persons to the *Mistaken* Office only of Preaching and Administ'ring Sacraments, under the Name of *Presbyters*, and so introduced into the Church a *New Unscriptural Office*, not of *Divine Institution*, tho' called by the Name of the Office of *Presbyters*.

I appeal now to the Impartial and Judicious Reader, whether this is not a Natural Representation of the Matter, even according to Mr P. Own Account (founded upon the *Mistake* of Those who first introduced the Office only of Preaching and Administ'ring Sacraments) and whether it do's not from hence appear, that what Mr P. calls his Answer to my 8th Thesis and All those that follow, is Really and in Truth a very Good Confirmation of the said Thesis. For in his Answer he Grants, that the Office only of Preaching and Administ'ring Sacraments was introduced by *Mistake* of Scripture, and if so, then the said Office is an *Unscriptural Office*, and not of *Divine Institution*; which is the Sum of my Eighth Thesis, and That whereon are built my following Theses.

And as the First Clause of Mr P. Answer do's thus Confirm my 8th Thesis, and consequently All those that follow; so do's it on the other hand Overthrow the Remaining Part of his Own Answer. For since, according to his own Account of the Matter, the Office only of Preaching and Administ'ring Sacraments was introduced by *Mistake* of the Meaning of the Word *Presbyter* in Scripture, it will follow, that those who were ordained to the Office of a *Bishop* or True-Scripture-*Presbyter*, and those who were ordained to the Office of a *Mistaken-Scripture-Presbyter*, were Not ordained really to the same Office, and consequently are Not invested with the same Power; as is largely proved in my Propositions Numb. III. P. 42, 43.

In like manner, whereas he saith, the whole Matter depends on the *Divine Institution*, — since 'tis by the *Divine Institution* we are to Correct the *Mistakes* of *After-ages*; what is the plain Consequential Import of these Words, but that the Office in dispute was the *Mistake* of *After-ages*, (and so an Office Not of

of *Divine Institution*) which is therefore to Confirm again what I lay down in my 8th Thesis? Once more, if, as he thinks, *Ecclesiastical History affords several Considerable Testimonies (and some of them more Antient than We can alledge) on His Side*, i. e. that the Office in dispute was only a *Mistake of After-ages*, this do's but still further Confirm, what I assert in my 8th Thesis, *viz.* that the Said Office in dispute is *Not of Divine Institution*:

Upon the whole therefore I appeal to the Impartial and Judicious Reader, whether Mr P. has not taken an Effectual Way to *shorten the Dispute*, namely, by Giving such an Answer to my 8th Thesis and those that follow, as contains in it (over and over again) a *Confirmation of the Truth of my 8th Thesis*, and consequently of All that follow it. I might therefore without any more adoe proceed immediately to set down here my Following Theses, as *Holding Good*, because *Not Weakened*, but *Confirmed* by what Mr P. has offered in reference to them, under my 8th Thesis. But Mr P. having elsewhere laid down some Assertions, which relate to this particular Point, I shall therefore give them here the Consideration.

Mr P. We Deny that there has ever been Any such Office as this (*viz.* to which belongs the Power of Preaching and Administering Sacraments, without that of Government and Ordination) in the Church, *Let. 8. p. 24.*

Dr W. If by your Denyal you mean only (what you express in the Lines going before the Passage cited in the fore-mentioned Paragraph, *viz.*) that you deny, *that ever God has instituted Any such Office*, this is indeed Agreeable to your Own Principles of the *Twofold Order*, and what I at present suppose: but if you mean More by it, if you mean that there has Never been Any such Office (not only *de Jure* or by *Divine Institution*; but also) *de Facto* or in the Practice of the Church, then you do no other than Deny plain *Matter of Fact*, or the Known Practice of the Church, and that too of the Universal Church for Many Ages. And for proof hereof I need but appeal to the *Rituals* of the Church, whence it appears, that for many Ages before the Reformation there was introduced and practised an Ordination of Per-
sons

sons to the Office only of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments*, Distinct from the Ordination of Persons to the Other Office of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments and also Ordaining*. But

Mr *Peirce* (to do him Justice) has been so obliging as to save me the Labour of having Recourse to the *Rituals* of the Church, inasmuch as he has said, what is Equivalent to Acknowledging, that there has been *de Facto* in the Church such an Office, as the Office only of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments*. For saith Mr *P. Lett.* 7. p. 15. "There were really but Two Offices receiv'd in the Church, tho' thro' a Mistake of the Two Names of One Office, that One Office was split into Two. Now if there were Originally received in the Church Two Offices, and One of the Two was afterwards thro' a Mistake *Split into Two*, then it apparently follows, that there were *de Facto* (tho' not *de Jure*) Three Offices in the Church. And since the Office of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments and also Ordaining*, and the Office of *Deacons*, were the Two Offices suppoed by Mr *P.* to be Originally received, therefore the Office only of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments* must be the Third Office, which did *de Facto* arise in the Church from *Splitting into Two* the Former of the Original Offices aforementioned. Wherefore from Mr *Peirce's* own Account of the Matter in the forecited place *Lett.* 7. p. 15. it follows, that the Office only of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments* has been *de Facto* introduced and practised in the Church. For had there been No More Offices introduced and practised in the Church *de Facto*, than there were *de Jure*, that is, No More than the Two of Divine Institution, then there had been no Occasion for Mr *P.* coining such a Solution, as he here makes use of, *viz.* that One of the Two Offices Divinely instituted was thro' *Mistake split into Two*: whereas His making use of such a Solution necessarily supposes, that besides the Two Offices Divinely instituted, there was introduced and practised *de Facto* a Third Office to be Accounted for.

Having thus shewn, that the forementioned Solution made use of by Mr *P.* do's necessarily and evidently suppose, that the Office only of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments*

ments was *de Facto* practised in the Church, it remains now to shew, that his Solution of the Matter is not true, and Consequently will not prove what Mr P. brings it to prove. The State of the Matter in reference to this particular is this in short: (as I have observed *Numb. IV. p. 17.*) The *Presbyterians* assert, that there were but Two Orders Originally or of Divine Institution, *viz.* One of Preaching and Administring Sacraments, and also Ordaining; the Other of Deacons. Hereupon I have observed to Mr P. that there has been (if not *de Jure*, yet at least) *de Facto* introduced and practised for many Ages in the Church Another Office, *viz.* only of Preaching and Administring Sacraments. To this Mr P. replies, that this Other Office So *de Facto* introduced is not Really a Distinct Office from the First of the Two he allows of, but only *that Same First Office thro' Mistake split into Two*; and therefore the Offices received in the Church have been all along Really but Two in their Own Nature and Institution, *Let. 7. p. 15.* But that this Reply of Mr P. is altogether Groundless, I have shewn *Numb. IV. p. 15.* For 'tis evident, that the Stress of his Reply lies upon this, that One of the Two Offices Divinely Instituted has been thro' Mistake *split into Two*. If therefore it can be made appear, that No such thing has ever hapned, then Mr *Pearce's* Reply falls to the Ground. And that No such thing has ever hapned, I prove thus: The One Office falsely supposed by

Mr P. to be *split into Two*, is the Office of Preaching and Administring Sacraments and also Ordaining. Now I aver, that this Office has Never been *split into Two*, and that for this single but substantial Reason, *because it has been all along preserved Whole and Entire* in the Order of Bishops. For These have all along had *All* the three Powers of Preaching and Administring Sacraments and also Ordaining, even by the Acknowledgment of the *Dissemblers* themselves. And if the Bishops have all along had *All* the said Powers of the said One Office, how then can the same One Office be said (without a Paradox) to be *split in Two*, namely, between *Bishops* and those commonly called *Presbyters*? Since therefore the Office only of Preaching and Administring Sacraments can't arise from the said One Office (of the Two Original

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II

ginal Offices) being *split into Two*, it must be a *New*, and *Distinct* Office *de Facto* introduced by Men, and so *Not of Divine Institution*, as is affirmed in my 8th Thesis; which therefore I have proved to *Hold Good*, notwithstanding All that has been offered by Mr P. to invalidate or overthrow it. Wherefore I proceed now to my Following Theses, which depend on the 8th, and consequently still *Hold Good*, for Ought Mr P. has Any where objected. Therefore

IX. According to the Doctrine of the *Twofold Order*, that Order of the *Threesfold*, whose Office consisted *only in Preaching and Administering Sacraments*, and which at the Reformation was called the Order of *Presbyters* (being *Not of Divine or Apostolical Institution*) had *Not any Valid Power or Authority to Ordain*. Therefore

X. Any Ordination performed by Such, as at the Reformation were of the said Order or Office *only of Preaching and Administering Sacraments*, and were then called *Presbyters*, cannot be *Valid*. But

XI. That Sort of Ordination, which has been ever since the Reformation called *Presbyterian Ordination*, was *Originally* (or then at the Reformation) performed by Such as were of the said Order of the *Threesfold*, and were called *Presbyters*, and therefore by Thesis X. cannot be *Valid*. Therefore

XII. *Presbyterian Ordination* being thus *Originally Invalid*, the Several Acts of pretended Ordination, whereby it has been or is Continued down *Successively* from One Generation to Another must be *likewise Invalid*. Therefore

XIII. The *Presbyterian Ordination* So Continued at this Very Day among Our *Present Dissenters* must be *Invalid*, even according to the Doctrine of the *Twofold Ministerial Order* maintained by the *Dissenters* themselves. Therefore and to Conclude

XIV. And lastly, *Presbyterian Ordination* (being *Invalid*, both according to the Doctrine of the *Threesfold Ministerial Order*, as appears from the V. and VI. Theses; and also according to the Doctrine of the *Dissenters* themselves, or of the *Twofold Order*, as appears from Thesis VII. to XIII. inclusively; it follows, that it) is *Absolutely*, or Every Way *Invalid*. Q. E. P.

I

Thus



Thus I have Given the Reader an Impartial Account, as to the Sum or Substance of What Mr *Peirce* has Any where offered by way of Answer to *my Theses*; and I now leave the Reader to judge, whether, what is here Replied by me to Mr *Peirce's* Objections do's not shew, that Nothing offered by Mr *Peirce* do's in reality Invalidate or Overthrow my *Theses*, but that *My said Theses Against the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination* still *Hold Good*. I proceed now in the Second place to shew, that Mr *Peirce's Propositions For the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination* do *Not* hold Good.

Mr Peirce's Propositions For the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination, with Dr Wells's Answers, &c.

I. NO Office can be justly look'd upon as Sacred, which God has not appointed.

Dr *Wells*. If the Meaning of your Proposition is this, that No Office can be justly look'd upon as Sacred, which God *Himself* has not appointed, then I *Deny* it: but if the Meaning be this, that No Office can be justly look'd upon as Sacred, which God, either by *Himself*, or by *some Other Divinely Commissioned and Authorised*, has not appointed, then I *Grant* it, Numb. I. p. 16.

Mr *Peirce*. My Meaning is, that No Office can be justly look'd upon as Sacred, which God hath not appointed *Himself*, or by *some Other divinely Commissioned or Authorised* THEREUNTO. Lett. 6. p. 29.

II. The Offices which God has appointed, and the Powers which he has respectively annexed to them, are Inseparable.

Dr *W*. The said Offices and their Respective Powers are *Inseparable in this Sense*, viz. that no Power can be justly or regularly *Separated* from any Respective Office, to which it has been Divinely annexed: but notwithstanding this, the said Offices and their Respective Powers are *Not so Inseparable*, but that the Like Powers, which are *Jointly* annex'd to One Office, may be *Separately* annexed to Other Offices. Numb. I. p. 16, 17.

Mr *P*.

Mr P. I need only let you know, that I understand it (viz. my second Proposition) in that Sense only, in which you Grant it. *Let. 6. p. 29.*

III. 'Tis only by the Scriptures we are to judg, what Offices are of Divine Appointment, and what Powers do Respectively belong to them, and when they are Regularly Conveyed. Therefore

Dr W. That we are to Judg of these Matters *only by the Scriptures*, as the (Original or Primary) Rule, I readily Grant: but then I utterly Deny, that we are to Judg of the said Matters *only by the Scriptures*, in such a Sense, or so far, as to Exclude All Consideration of, or Regard to, *the Practice of the Primitive Church in the Ages Next succeeding*, as being the Best Comment on the Scripture-Rule (and so a Secondary Rule) in Disputable Cases, and more especially in such Cases, as relate to Matter of Fact. *Numb. II. p. 23.*

Mr P. I have not said Any thing, from whence it can be infer'd, that I am for excluding all Consideration of, or Regard to, *Primitive Practice*. I care not how much is allowed to it, so it be only considered as a *Comment*, and we do not Mistake it for the Text of the Rule, or do not Confound the Text by it. *Let. 7. p. 7.*

Dr W. The Allowance, which in these words you make to the *Primitive Practice*, do's satisfy me, *Numb. III. p. 11.* For you having thus Declared, that you Care not How MUCH is Allowed to *Primitive Practice*, so it be only Considered as a *Comment &c.* it may well be supposed, that you will readily Allow what is most Reasonable to be Allowed to It, viz. that in Disputable Cases, where the Scripture it self is not Express on Either Side, there a *Decisive Dference* ought to be Allowed to the Judgment and Practice of the *Primitive Christians*, who Conversed with, or Lived nearest, the Sacred Writers, and so had Better Opportunity of Knowing the True Meaning of the Sacred Writings, than We can have at this Distance; and having such Opportunities can't but in Common ~~Consistency~~ be supposed to make a Right Use of Them, unless plain Evidence can be brought to the Contrary. This is not to mistake the *Comment for the Text*, nor to Confound the Text by it; but it is the only Rational Way to

Come at the *True Meaning* of the Text. And hereby is fully shewn how far *I* approve of what you say with Reference to the *Primitive Practice*; and that what else is offered by you either *Let. 7. p. 7.* or *Let. 8. p. 8.* is impertinent and foreign to the Case before Us. For I do not desire you to *Allow the Secondary Rule any Place, where it differs from the Primary One, either Contradicting it, or Vouching for any thing not found in it*: I only desire you to Allow, what Common Modesty (one would think) should sufficiently induce you to Allow, viz. that the *Primitive Christians*, who Convers'd with, or Lived Nearest, the *Apostles*, had Better Opportunity of Knowing the True Meaning and Intention of the Apostolical Writings, and consequently of Knowing what do's or do's not *Contradict*, what is or is not *to be found* in the Scripture, than you or Any other can have at this time of day. I Grant (as well as you) that the *Will of God in All these Matters is Our Rule, and the H. Scriptures are therefore Our Rule, because we are sure they contain a Revelation of the Will of God*: but the Question is, What is the *Meaning of the Scripture*, as to the Case before Us? From Scripture you infer, that the *Twofold Order* is Agreeable to the *Will of God*; from Scripture I infer, that the *Threesfold Order* is Agreeable to the *Will of God*. The Upholder therefore is, Whether *You or I* understand the said places of Scripture Agreeably to the *True Meaning of the Sacred Writers*. This, I say, can't be Better Decided, nay, can No other ways be Rationally Decided, than by appealing to the Judgment and Practice of Those who lived with, or nearest to, the Sacred Writers themselves, and so had the Best Opportunity of Perfectly informing themselves, as to the *True Meaning of the Sacred Writers* in the Case before Us. And therefore in short, 'tis altogether impertinent and absurd to pretend, that the *Secondary Rule* is to be Corrected by the *Primary or Original Rule*, in a Case where the Sense or Meaning of the said *Primary Rule* is the thing Disputed, and can be Rightly known only by the *Secondary Rule*. Further, I think, (as well as you) that *God will never Blame men for Keeping to the Primary Rule, tho' they should thereby act against the Secondary One*; but I say, as to the Present Case, the most, and indeed only, Rational Way to Keep

to the *Primary Rule*, is to *act according to the Secondary Rule*. And therefore I think, I can't express my Christian Charity to you and your Brethren in a Better Way, than by Desiring and Beseeching you seriously to consider, whether God may not most highly and justly *Blame Men for not Keeping to the Primary Rule*, when they might have so Easily known the Meaning of it by help of the *Secondary One*; and whether it will not be a poor and insignificant Excuse at the Day of Accounts to alledg, that God has not given them in the *Primary One* an Intimation of *Any Other Rule* they are to go by, since God has given them *Reason*, and thereby, if duly used, has given them sufficient Intimation, that the Best Way to Discover the True Meaning of the Sacred Writers in Disputable Cases, is by Following the Judgment and Practice of Those Primitive Christians, who lived *Wish*, or *Nearest* to, the Sacred Writers, and of whose Sincerity and Uprightness we have no warrantable Grounds to Doubt. Lastly whereas you are pleased to be So Free as to say, that the *Very Practice of the Apostles themselves is not Any Farther a Rule necessarily Obliging us, than as their Practice is contained and set forth in the Scriptures*; you must give me leave to put you upon speaking still more *Freely*, by desiring a Plain Answer to this Question, *viz.* Whether you'll say, that the *Very Practice of the Apostles themselves not contained in Scripture* was Repugnant to, or Not Agreeable with, their Practice contained in *Scripture*? If you'll be so Free as to say this of them, I leave the Reader to judge, if you do not speak *Freely of them with a Witness*. On the other hand, if you can't but allow it to be Rational and Pious to suppose, that the Practice of the Apostles *not contained in Scripture* was Agreeable to their Practice contained in *Scripture*; then you must naturally allow also, that the Practice of the Apostles *not contained in Scripture* is the Best Comment on the Practice of the Apostles contained in *Scripture*, when this is not so clearly expressed there, as to leave no Room for Doubt, and so for Dispute in several Cases. But to Allow this, is to Allow All I contend for, namely, that Those who lived *Wish*, or *Nearest*, the Apostles, had thereby Opportunity of Fully Knowing the Practice of the Apostles, as to the Matter of

Ordination or the *Threesfold Order*; and therefore since the said Practice of the Apostles, tho' *not contained in Scripture*, yet can't without Impiety be supposed Any other than Agreeable to their Practice contained in Scripture, it will Rationally follow, that Those Primitive Christians Knew the True Meaning and Intention of the Apostolical Writings Better than Any can now adays, as to the Places in Dispute, and therefore a *Decisive Deference* ought to be paid to their Authority in the Present Controversy, as the only Rational Way to put an End to it. I have the longer insisted upon your third Proposition, or this Head of *Scripture*, that the Reader may Clearly see, how Frivolous and Impertinent is All the Noise and Out-cry you make about *Scripture-Proof* in the Present Case, wherein (as I have observed *Numb. IV. p. 22.*) the Sense of Scripture being that which is *Disputed*, can't therefore be brought for a *Proof*. Go we on then to your fourth Proposition.

IV. Wherever a Person is Rightly ordained to Any Office of Divine Appointment, he is to be look'd on as Invested with All those Powers, which do belong to that Office according to the Scriptures, and which appear from thence to have been annexed by God himself to it; as appears from *Prop. II. and III.* Therefore

Dr *W.* What is expressly Asserted in this your Proposition, is Not Any thing *Controverted* by Us. *Numb. II. p. 29.*

V. If the Scripture do's give to Presbyters the Power of Ordaining, then All those who are Rightly Ordained to the Office of Presbyters, are to be looked on as having the Power of Ordaining by *Prop. IV.*

Dr *W.* I have observed *Numb. II. p. 32.* that this your Proposition being apply'd to the Present Case, namely, to the *Presbyters in Dispute*, the Meaning of it express'd at large must be this: "If the Scripture do's give to *Presbyters* so called IN the New Testament the Power of Ordaining " then All those who are Rightly Ordained to the Office of " *Presbyters* so called A F T E R the Times of the New " Testament, are to be look'd on as having the Power of " Ordaining. Now I say, that the Sequel here, or Inference from Presbyters in the New Testament to Presbyters *after*

after the New Testament is Not Good; forasmuch as Presbyters so called *in* the New Testament, and Presbyters so called *after* the New Testament may be of Very Different Offices, so Different as that (tho' they agree in Name, yet) One Sort *May*, and the Other *May not*, have the Power of Ordaining, as is largely shewn in my Propositions drawn up *Numb. II. p. 25 and 33.*

Mr P. I Offer to stand to the Argument, even so as you have formed it, *provided* my Other Assertion be joyned with it, that those called Presbyters in the New Testament, and those called Presbyters *after* the New Testament are One and the Same; and unless they are so, they are not Rightly ordained to the Office of Presbyters at all. For there can be no Right in any Ordination to an Unscriptural Office in the Church, *Let. 7. p. 14.*

Dr W. According to the Doctrine of the *Twofold Order*, your forementioned *Proviso* can by no means be allowed of. For according to this your Doctrine, the word *Presbyter* is look'd upon to denote always in the New Testament such as *had* the Power of Ordaining; and if so, then those called presbyters in the New Testament can't be *One and the same* with those called Presbyters *after* the New Testament; because these were ordained to the Office only of Preaching and Administring Sacraments, and so to a New, Distinct Office, introduced (according to your Own Doctrine, as I have proved above under my Eighth Thesis) by Men thro' Mistake, and so an Unscriptural Office. And surely *Scriptural* Presbyters and *Unscriptural* Presbyters can't be *One and the same*. As for what (you say) follows upon not Allowing your *Proviso*, viz. *Unless they are so*, (i. e. unless Presbyters in and after N. T. are One and the same) *they* (i. e. those called Presbyters after N. T.) *are not Rightly Ordained to the Office of Presbyters at all*: for there can be no Right Ordination to an Unscriptural Office in the Church; this Consequence makes for me, and evidently Confirms what I have above under my 8th Thesis proved, viz. that according to your Own Doctrine the *Presbyters in dispute* have No Right to the Power either of Ordaining, or so much as of Preaching or Administring Sacraments; forasmuch as they were Ordained

to an *Unscriptural* Office, and so not *Rightly* ordained to Any Ministerial Power *at all*, according to your Own Principles. In short therefore your 5th Proposition makes nothing for you, according to your Own Principles, forasmuch as tho' the Scripture do's give to Presbyters the Power of Ordaining, yet the Presbyters in dispute were not *Rightly* ordained to the Office of Presbyters, (because not to the Scriptural Office of Presbyters) and therefore are to be look'd on, as Not having the Power of Ordaining.

VI. Distinct Names in Scripture do not imply necessarily Distinct Offices; but One and the Same Office may be express'd by Two or More Different Names. Therefore

Dr W. As your Proposition contains what No one (as I know of) Denies, so the most Proper Answer thereto is only to put you in mind, that 'tis altogether as True on the other hand, that the *Same Name* in Scripture do's not imply necessarily the *same Office*, but *One and the Same Name* may be apply'd to *Two or More Different Offices*. Numb III. p. 37.

VII. If Men thro' a Mistake &c. — Therefore

VIII. If the Office of a Bishop and a Presbyter &c. — as appears by the seventh Proposition.

IX. The Names of a Bishop and a Presbyter &c. — Presbyters have also. Q. E. P.

Dr W. I have observed Numb. III. p. 36. that the Argument contained in your Three foregoing Propositions, is the same with (what you call) your Answer to my Eighth Thesis, and All the following Theses. And I have accordingly in this Summary View under my Eighth Thesis given this your Argument a Full Consideration, and Plainly shew'd, that it is so far from *Proving the Validity*, that it *Confirms* my Arguments for the *Invalidity*, of Presbyterian Ordination, according to your Own Doctrine of the *Two-fold Order*. I have indeed observed above, that if what you say concerning *Mistake* was True, it would serve to weaken the *Threefold Order*. And therefore to shew, that it is Not true, I have further observed to you Numb. IV. p. 10. that the Supposition of such a *Mistake* is Groundless and Unreasonable, because Such as lived *with*, or *marry'd* the *Apostles* looked upon the said Offices to be Distinct, and These must

in reason be allowed to have the *Greatest Opportunities* to inform themselves *aright* as to the Ministerial Orders; and having so, must in Common Charity be supposed to make *Due Use of the Opportunities* they had, until plain Evidence can be Brought to the Contrary.

Mr P. We have Two Antient Witnesses of the Twofold Order, *Clemens Romanus* and *Polycarp. Lett. 8. p. 18.*

Dr W. I flatly Deny that they are Any Witnesses of the Twofold Order, as shall be shewn, whenever you please to produce the Passages out of their Writings, which you erroneously take for such Testimonies.

[I come now to your Remaining *Propositions*, which I Answered *Numb. 4th*. And I must observe to the Reader, that I have now waited *Two Months* in expectation of a Reply from you, but neither have Received nor Heard of Any come forth. Likewise I must observe further, that in order to lay open the more clearly the Great Weakness of your Arguments founded upon the *Ambiguity* of the Words *Presbyters* and *Bishops*, I allowed Two Distinct Papers, viz. *Numb. II*. and *III.* to that purpose. Hereupon you found fault with me for not *Answering All your Propositions at once*, *Lett. 6. p. 26. Lett. 7 p. 17.* and that so far as to insinuate at the end of your *Lett. 6th* and *7th*, that if I considered not More of your Propositions together at a time, you would not trouble your self to give Any Answer to what I should write. Well, in my next Paper *Numb. IV.* I answer *All your Remaining Propositions* together, and in a very Narrow Compass; and therefore took away the Pretence you were willing to have had for not Going on in the Controversy, and so had just Reason to Expect a Reply in the Time Agreed upon. But after all you think it Best to be Silent, and that altho' in these your Last *Propositions* there are some Arguments not touched upon before, and which therefore you can't with any face Pretend to have Answered before, so that notwithstanding what you are pleased to say at the end of your *8th Letter*,
I sup.

I suppose the Impartial and Judicious Reader will think you have still Reason to Publish on, what you have further to say in Defence of your Cause, if you have Any thing left to say. To compleat the Design of this Paper, I shall here adjoin what I have afore delivered *Numb. IV.* to your Remaining *Propositions.*]

X. The Scripture do's not distinguish Two Offices —
— Therefore

XI. Whoever is Rightly Ordained &c. — must have the Power of Ordination also.

Dr *W.* The Scriptures *not Expressly Distinguishing* or *Distinctly Mentioning* the *Threefold Order* is no Valid Argument, that it do's not allow of it; or that the *Threefold Order* is not Consonant to Scripture. I appeal to two other Instances, viz. *Infant-Baptism*, and *Sprinkling*; Both allowed of by your Own Party as Consonant to Scripture, tho' not Expressed in Scripture. *Numb. IV. p. 4.*

XII. Christ left but One — over his Church.

XIII. This One Office — of the Apostles.

XIV. The Apostles are to be considered — and in that alone they have Successors.

Dr *W.* These Propositions, as they are True in themselves, so make not one whit against the Threefold Order. For they do not at all hinder but that Christ might, much less do they Prove that Christ did not, leave an Office *Inferior* to that of the Apostles, and to which the Ruling of the Church did not belong. Nay, 'tis sufficient, I hope, if the Apostles themselves left such an Inferior Office. *Numb. IV. p. 5.*

XV. The Scripture never gives us any Account —
— Therefore

XVI. They who succeed them, —

Dr *W.* The Scripture is the Word of Divine Truth, and therefore no wonder if it *never gives us any Account* of what *Never happened.* And Your manner of Expressing your self in this Proposition gives me Reason to think, that you do not rightly apprehend the State of the Controversy. I do by no means maintain, that the *Standing and permanent part* of
of

of the *Apostolical Office* was Divided into several Distinct Offices, in which they were to be succeeded, partly by One, and partly by Another sort of Officers. On the contrary I maintain, that the Apostles have but One sort of Successors, who therefore (according to your XVIth Proposition) Succeed them in the Whole of their Ordinary Capacity &c. And 'tis from this very Consideration, that I infer the Invalidity of the *Presbyterian Ordination*, forasmuch as the first Beginners of it were Not of that One Sort of Successors to the Apostles. In short, I assert that *Bishops* are the sole Successors of the Apostles, and accordingly succeed them in the Whole of the *Apostolical Office*: As for the Office of *Preaching and Administering Sacraments only*, 'tis an Office Distinct from that of the Apostles; and the Officers of this are not invested with the *Apostolical Office*, but Another Distinct one, *Numb. IV. p. 5, 6.* as has been made fully appear Above in this present Paper under my 8th Thesis, more particularly p. 10, 11.

XVII. The Apostles considered in their Ordinary Capacity — were Presbyters. Therefore

XVIII. All those who are Rightly —

XIX. The Power of Ordination did belong to the Apostles — Therefore

XX. All those who are Rightly ordained — as appears by Prop. 18 and 19.

Dr W. 'Tis obvious, that the whole Stress of this Argument is founded on the Word *Presbyters*, and consequently is the same at the bottom with your Proposition V. and therefore the Answer already given to That, will also serve to Overthrow These Propositions. *Numb. IV. p. 6.*

XXI. The Power of Government and Ordination — of the Episcoparians. Dr W. Granted.

XXII. The Power of Government in the First Church —

XXIII. The Apostles in founding other Churches —

XXIV. The Power therefore of Ordination — but to a Plurality.

Dr W. The Argument contained in the foregoing Propositions is founded on a downright Falstiy or Mistake; forasmuch as the Power of Governing the Church of *Jerusalem* was lodged by the Apostles in the hands of a single Person

Person, St James, as may be fairly gathered from the New Testament it self, and is confirmed by the Joint Testimony of Antiquity. Which being so, it will follow according to your self, that since the *Apostles* in founding other Churches took the same Cause, therefore they lodged the Government of Every Particular Church in the Hands of a Single Person, not of a Plurality; and therefore that the Power of Ordination do's belong not to a Plurality, but to a Single Person. Q. E. P.

I have now gone thro' the Design of this Paper; and as I am not Conscious to my self of having done Any Injustice to you or your Cause, so I leave it now to the Impartial and judicious Reader, whether it do's not appear from this *Summary View*, that *Presbyterian Ordination* is invalid, even according to the Doctrine of the *Twofold Order* maintained by the *Dissenters* themselves.



I have

I have been now employed for above *Two Years* in endeavouring to be Serviceable to the *Dissenters*, and that out of no other Principles than Those of *Christian Charity* in general, and of my *Ministerial Duty* in particular. And tho' I am, and ever have been of my Own Nature Averse to Controversy, yet the Two foresaid Religious Principles have such an Irresistible Sway over me, that I cannot Refuse to Employ so much of the *Remainder of my whole Life*, as shall be Requisite, in the same Service. Sure I am, that as No one can have a more Just Detestation of the Heinous Sin the *Dissenters*, and especially their *Teachers* ly under; so No one can have a More Tender Concern for their Eternal State and Condition, or be More Ready to do Any Good Office (Spiritual or Temporal) to *Any Dissenter* in the Kingdom, than My Self. Upon this account it is that I am and ever shall be, however dealt with by you,

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